

House Armed Services Committee

DEMOCRATS

For immediate release: July 28, 2005

Ike Skelton, Ranking Member

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Skelton and Harman Respond to General Casey's Remarks

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following joint statement regarding Gen. George W. Casey's public comments on reducing American troops in Iraq:

"We are encouraged that Gen. Casey sees progress in Iraq and we hope it continues.

As we have long argued, the Administration must set forth benchmarks to measure success, deadlines for meeting those benchmarks, and a strategy to adjust our troop levels based on whether we have met our objectives.

Leaving Iraq before the job is complete would be disastrous. Terrorists would own the streets, and regional countries like Iran would seek to fill the power vacuum. Gen. Casey is correct that a drawdown in forces can only occur once the security situation warrants it, Iraqi forces assume more responsibility, and a more robust political process takes root.

Without a strategic plan to achieve success in Iraq, we risk breaking the US Army through repeated deployments. We also risk losing the strong support of the American people, which our troops have enjoyed. To avoid this, we must redouble our effort to train Iraqi security forces, embed additional trainers with Iraqi units, and foster a free and fair Constitutional government.

Achieving these benchmarks must be the predicate for removing troops from Iraq."

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